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1938  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Buenos Aires, December 31, 1937.

No. 5691.

Subject: Current Events, Argentina.

To: Asst. C. of S., G-2.

RECEIVED G/2 W:G. JAN 19 1938

POLITICS.

The press at the end of the year is unanimous in its opinion that Argentina has little reason to be proud of her political and parliamentary record during 1937. Members of Congress were more interested in the presidential elections of September than in their legislative duties so that day after day no quorum could be obtained to transact business; although the budget was submitted in May no action was taken on it. A special session of Congress will meet on January 12, it is forecast, for the special purpose of acting on the budget.

Dr. Ortiz and Dr. Castillo, president and vice-president elect, will take their oaths of office on February 20 at 4 p.m. The national elections to choose 79 new members of the Chamber of Deputies are to be held in March. The Radical ticket carried the city of Buenos Aires in the presidential elections of September and there is considerable speculation in political circles as to whether this opposition will be able to elect enough deputies to maintain a majority in the Chamber after March. Should it do so the task of the new president will be considerably complicated.

RAILWAYS.

An agreement has been concluded between the Cordoba Central Railway and the Argentine Government whereby the latter will operate the road under lease for four years, with an option to purchase at any time during this period. The company will receive an annual payment of £380,000 sterling; for the last year, if the purchase has not been approved by Congress, the Government will pay only \$3,726,000 Argentine pesos (approximately \$1,200,000 U.S. currency) which is the net profit of the company in the 1936-37 fiscal year.

The agreement for the purchase by the Government of the Transandine Railway was not ratified by Congress at its last session and lapsed today. It is expected that a new agreement will be signed early in January, under the same terms as that of last June 8. This agreement provided for the transfer of all the assets of the company to the Government for £750,000 sterling; 10% of this was to be in cash and the remainder in 4% bonds. The Government has, however, undertaken to reconstruct the portion of the line destroyed by the Rio Plomo disaster in 1934, damage estimated at \$5,600,000 pesos. Operations have been at a standstill since that disaster.

No. 5691.

KRUPPS INTERESTED?

The local press published a report recently that Krupps intended to invest \$40,000,000 pesos in the purchase of mines in the province of Salta. The mines are reported rich in gold, silver, nickel, iron and lead. Another report is that a Swiss syndicate is interested in the same mines which have been inspected by Karl van Bellingher, son of a former Swiss Cabinet minister. There is no official confirmation.

NEW MUNITIONS FACTORY?

Another press report, also without official confirmation, is that an Austrian munitions manufacturer, Fritz Mandl, who has been in Buenos Aires for some time, is negotiating with good prospects of success for the construction of a munitions factory in which Austrian machinery would be installed.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION.

The National Highway Department announced this month that, up to the end of November, \$49,957,956 pesos had been spent in highway construction and repair. Detailed figures of the mileage involved are not yet available.

PARAGUAYAN UPRISEING.

On the night of December 21st a group of communists led by former Major José Estigarribia attempted to capture the Parque de Guerra at Asuncion. The communique issued by the Government stated that the guard repelled the attack, killing Estigarribia and severely wounding Lieutenant Rogelio Fiore. This incident appears to have no national significance, as tranquility throughout the country was reported absolute, with both army and navy ready to put down any subversive movement.

AIRPLANES.

The last of the order of Martin Bombers for the Navy arrived from the United States by steamer Tercero on December 27th. The day before ten training planes arrived for the army, also from the United States. These were shipped from California by Japanese steamer, and are N.A. 16-4-P planes.

*Lester Baker*  
Lester Baker, Col. Inf.,  
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Buenos Aires, March 1, 1938.

No. 5744.

Subject: Current Events, Argentina, February.

To: Asst. C. of S., G-2.

RECEIVED G/2 W. F. APR 5 1938

✓ FLYING FORTRESSES.

The record trip of the six army bombing planes from the United States to Argentina on the occasion of the inauguration of Dr. Roberto Ortiz as president on February 20th was a notable event not only in the fact that Colonel Olds and his crew had coffee in Florida on Thursday morning and lunch in Buenos Aires Friday but also as a demonstration of the ability of the U.S. Army Air Force to be on the spot in South America in case of necessity. In other words, it was taken by the man in the street to indicate that the United States is in a position, as never before, to uphold the principle of the Monroe Doctrine in case of a possible act of territorial expansion by European Fascist, or "have not", powers.

CIVIL AVIATION.

Last July the Argentine Government granted to Pan American Airways - Pan Air do Brasil - authorization to inaugurate an inland line of flight between Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro, via Asuncion, Paraguay. Since that time the company has operated a mail service only, but on February 21st it placed in service passenger Clippers over this route. With this new passenger service now in operation the Argentine capital has four mail-and-passenger air services weekly to the United States, as compared with two weekly - one French and one German - to Europe. It is expected, however, that within the next few months both England and Italy will be operating mail services at least to the East Coast of South America.

Early in March, Pan American Airways - Panagra - will commence a direct plane service between Buenos Aires and La Paz - Bolivia - without changing planes as has been the case on this route previously. This will be a weekly service and will continue from La Paz to Arequipa.

No. 5744.

DEFENSE MINISTRY.

What may indicate a unification of control of the Army, Navy and Air Force under a Minister of National Defense is pointed out in the press commenting on recent statements by the new heads of the Navy and War Departments. "The armed forces are one only, the two components must march together in unison because there is no reason to oppose each other", said the Minister of Marine. The Minister of War said: "The army and navy by their nature and the specific function assigned to each, are institutions which must go forward in full accord". La Nacion in commenting on these two statements says: "After this there remains only one forward step to take to arrive at a ministry of national defense and a single command".

TROOP SUBSISTENCE.

The Argentine Army has no single purchasing agency for troop subsistence, hence the ration cost varies in different garrisons of the country. The ration in Santa Fé costs 51 centavos daily, 55 centavos in Buenos Aires, 60 centavos in Diamante, 65 in Rio Cuarto, 69 in Marquesado, 75 in Comodoro Rivadavia, 80 in Covunco Centro, and 1 peso in Esquel. All the garrisons buy their supplies locally which accounts for the difference in costs of subsistence. Even in the garrisons in and around the Capital the ration varies in cost from 50 to 59 centavos. La Nacion in editorial comment on this difference in cost says that it may be a good thing for the pockets of local merchants but it is bad for the national treasury. It calls for the creation of a central bureau to purchases staples such as flour, beans, coffee, yerba, salt, sugar, etc. and only perishable goods to be purchased by individual garrisons locally.

GRAIN ELEVATORS.

Government contracts were awarded during February for the construction of grain elevators at Santa Fé, Buenos Aires, Diamante, Concepción del Uruguay, and La Plata to cost 15,000,000 pesos each - about \$4,000,000 U.S. - and another at the New Port in Buenos Aires to cost 11,800,000 pesos. These new elevators when completed will greatly facilitate and cheapen the handling of the huge grain shipments of Argentina which are her principal article of export to Europe and the United States.

NO. 5744.

POLES STILL LEAD.

Polish immigrants to Argentina led all other nationalities during 1937, according to Government statistics, with Italians in second place and Spaniards third. First class overseas arrivals were about the same as 1936 with a total of 12,756. Second class arrivals were 41,469 and third class 35,560. Britons were the first among nationalities in first class with 2,432; Germans 1,983, French 806, Spaniards 727. In second and third class there were 13,828 Poles, 10,026 Italians, 5ml50 Spaniards, 2,857 Germans, and 1,187 Portuguese.

LIVESTOCK CITY.

Buenos Aires is a city of domestic animals, the recent agrarian census shows. There are 30,677 horses, 2,244 sheep, 2,049 asses and mules, and 1,510 head of cattle within the jurisdiction of the city. Also the city has 665,149 head of poultry, 8,586 rabbits, 298 beehives and 39 pigs.

STATE OPERATES RAILWAY.

Early in February the State Railways took over the administration of the Central Córdoba Railway in accordance with the decree issued by the Government last December, for a period of four years. A sales contract has been signed with the English company giving the Government the right to purchase the entire company at a price of £9,500,000 during the period. This contract awaits Congressional approval.

MOTORIZING UNITS.

sizes

One hundred motor vehicles of various sizes were placed in commission during February in the Argentine Army Signal Corps, sappers, and scout detachments. This materiel from trucks to motor-cycles is practically all destined for the units which make up the Sixth Division stationed in Patagonia.

*Lester Baker*  
Lester Baker, Col. Inf.,  
Military Attaché.

6-1  
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107  
DEPARTMENT

Buenos Aires, April 19, 1938.

No. 5784.

Subject: Current Events, Argentina, April.

To: Asst. C. of S., G-2, War Department, Washington.

✓ RECEIVED G/2 W. D. MAY 16 1938

SHOWING THE FLAG.

The British gunboat Scarborough on one of the usual courtesy visits from the West Indies Station has been making calls at river ports on the Paraná as far in the interior as Santa Fé during April. Several times each year the smaller vessels of the British navy call at Atlantic ports of Argentina and those of the Scarborough class also show the White Ensign at all important river ports several hundred miles from the sea. Vessels of the United States Navy are rare visitors to Atlantic ports of South America which lie below the Equator, while with the British this is regular routine.

✓ FIRST ANDES CROSSING.

Twenty years ago, on April 13, 1918, the Andes were first crossed by air successfully in a heavier-than-air machine. The feat was accomplished by Lieutenant Luis C. Candelaria of the Argentine Army, accompanied by Miguel Soriano, flying an 80 h.p. Saulnier Le Rhone plane. The start was made at Zapala (Neuquén) and the mountains were crossed by way of Palau Mahuida and Pino Hachado at a height of 3,500 meters. The aviators landed at Temuco in Chilean territory successfully. Candelaria has abandoned flying and is living in Mendoza. Now, twenty years later, there are regular scheduled air services between Argentina and Chile carrying passengers and mail several times each week.

BEEF TO BOLIVIA.

Bolivia is expected to be an important customer for Argentine beef, considerable of it for army use evidently. Recently a trial shipment of 10 tons of frozen beef destined for La Paz was made from Buenos Aires by rail, a distance of 1,500 miles. On the success of this shipment depends an importation of 300 tons monthly - this will replace the former method of delivering Argentine cattle to Bolivia on the hoof which arrived in poor condition in many cases.

No. 5784.

MUSSOLINI WANTS RANCHERS.

An Italian mission, chosen by an Italian firm which has received a concession for cattle-raising - and presumably packing - from the Italian government to operate in Ethiopia, is reported to be on the way here to study methods of cattle raising and packing. The mission is reported also to have Brazil and Uruguay on its itinerary. The principal object of the mission is reported to be the task of persuading experienced Italian ranchers resident in South America to pull up stakes and move to Ethiopia for cattle raising.

ARGENTINE COTTON CROP.

Latest estimates by the Ministry of Agriculture on the cotton crop of 1937-38 give a total of 72,000 tons. This is the largest crop in the last eleven years with the exception of the previous year when, due to drought, the crop was only 31,170 tons. Heavy rains in January last are responsible for the increase in this year's crop over previous estimates. The heaviest cotton crop grown in Argentina was that of 1935-36 which amounted to 80,957 tons.

MINING DISCOVERY.

Discovery of a tin lode of enormous value is reported in the press from San Antonio de los Cobres in Los Angeles territory on the north-west frontier of Argentina. The value of the deposit is estimated at approximately \$800,000,000 Argentine pesos - over \$200,000,000 U.S. currency at present exchange. Prospectors in the employ of Rio Granada Mining Company located the lode.

BEEF FOR TOMMIES.

Purchases of Argentine meat for the British army this year are to be slightly less than usual, according to Major M.G. de la Bere who has arrived from London to supervise the fulfillment of contracts made by the British War Office. Corned beef, canned, forms the main meat ration of the British Tommy, and it is in this category of purchases that less will be bought than in previous years. Press comment here is to the effect that the danger of European war is not imminent if beef purchases for the British army are lower.

DECREE INTERVENTION.

Early in April President Ortiz decreed Federal intervention in the Province of San Juan because of irregularities in the administration of the Government of the Province. Admiral Enrique G. Fliess was appointed interventor. This is the fourteenth occasion that San Juan has been under an interventor since 1857.

FIAT PLANS EXPANSION.

It is reported locally that representatives of the FIAT automobile company of Italy are coming to South America to study the possibility of establishing a factory. It is expected in local automobile circles that any such factory would be established in or near Buenos Aires, as this country offers the most important market for motor cars, due to its topography, means of communication and business activity. American motor car manufacturers have for some years had assembly plants in Argentina.

NEW SHIPPING SERVICE.

Cargo vessels capable of doing 17 knots per hour are to be placed on the Genoa-Buenos Aires run by Compagnia Ligure di Navigazione, it is reported here. This will be a special cargo service and will not be in the passenger-carrying trade between the two countries, between which already operate several Italian lines.

POLISH IMMIGRANTS.

The Polish steamer Pulaski recently brought 700 immigrants to Buenos Aires, the majority of whom were of Polish nationality. They were practically wholly agricultural laborers, some destined to Argentina but many more bound for Paraguay which country in recent months has been making special efforts to induce agriculturists from Europe to come and settle. Every few weeks a Polish steamer arrives with several hundred immigrants for the two countries.

REGIMENTAL ANNIVERSARY.

President Ortiz was the principal guest at the celebration of the 126th anniversary of the founding of the Grenadier Guards(Granaderos a Caballo General San Martin) on March 16th. The regiment is the show regiment at official functions in Buenos Aires.

JUTE IN PARAGUAY.

The Paraguayan Ministry of Agriculture has decided to intensify the cultivation of jute in that country due to the great demand for the product in the European market. To this end the Government is distributing free seed to the farmers and urging jute cultivation.

*Lester Baker*  
Lester Baker, Col. Inf.,  
Military Attaché.

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF  
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108  
JUN 29 1938  
108  
DEPARTMENT

Buenos Aires, May 31, 1938.

No. 5812.

Subject: Current Events, Argentina, May.

To: Asst. C. of S., G-2, War Department, Washington.

RECEIVED G-2 W. D. JUN 27 1938

ARMY AIR MAIL TRANSPORT.

Early in May the director of Posts and Telegraphs asked the Government to provide army and navy pilots and machines to carry the mails to various parts of Argentina. Although there was no public reaction as far as the army and navy are concerned, the two leading newspapers of Buenos Aires - La Prensa and La Nacion - both opposed such an assignment. They pointed out that in other countries, especially in Europe, military pilots had in some cases started airmail routes but that these were soon taken over by civil companies. The main point brought out, however, was that military pilots have not the training for postal flying on schedule under all kinds of air conditions, and that, furthermore, such flying would inevitably detract from their military usefulness.

MILITARY AVIATION SCHOOL.

Late in May the Military Aviation School which is to train pilots from the non-commissioned personnel of the army opened its first course. The candidates were selected from all branches of the military establishment, after expressing their desire to join the air force. The course covers a period of two years, at the end of which time those who successfully pass will be made "military pilots". All those enrolled were either first sergeants or corporals.

NAVAL AVIATION ACCIDENT.

During calibration flying at Puerto Belgrano on May 27, 1938, supposedly due to motor trouble the navy plane Grumman M-0.5 piloted by Ensign Ronaldo J. Rossiter and with Mechanic Guillermo Casso on board plunged into the sea. The pilot was thrown clear and was picked up by a launch but the mechanic was drowned in the machine. The navy has not made a report, publicly, as to the cause of the crash.

✓ BRITISH NAVY TAKES URUGUAYAN MEAT.

The Frigorifico Nacional de Uruguay was the successful bidder in London recently for the canned meat contract for the Admiralty. The Montevideo press states that this means a year's employment for the Frigorifico and a substantial increase into the exchange fund of pounds sterling.

AIR SERVICE INSTRUCTORS.

Commenting on the fact that the Argentine Army Air Service has secured from the United States Army an air mission to instruct Argentine pilots in the use of recent fast bombers and pursuit planes, La Prensa points out that Argentine pilots should have been sent to the United States to acquire this instruction and at the plants where the planes were built. Furthermore, the paper points out that because selected pilots were not sent north when the planes were ordered, this material has not been used for several months and it will not be until the American aviators have arrived and started the instruction of the Argentine flyers.

PARAGUAY-BRAZIL HIGHWAY.

The Paraguayan Government has issued a decree approving the contract entered into with J.G.White Engineering Company of New York for the construction of an improved motor road to Brazil via the famous Iguazu Falls, which are claimed to be, next to Victoria Falls in Africa, the greatest in the world.

DIESEL EQUIPMENT FOR RAILWAY.

The Argentine Government on May 27, 1938, authorized the State Railways to purchase from General Electric Company five Diesel trains of three units each. The cost is reported to be three quarters of a million dollars. They will be used on the Córdoba Central Railway. It is reported that by the use of Diesels on the state railways there will be a saving of a million pesos a year in operation over steam locomotives.

OIL DISCOVERY.

Oil of a good quality is reported to have been struck at a depth of 400 meters near San Pedro, province of Jujuy, which lies south of the Bolivian border. It is stated that the supply seems abundant.

TO SELL PLANES.

The Military Aviation Factory at Córdoba has been authorized by the Ministry of War to sell, at cost price, Focke-Wulff planes manufactured there for civilian aviation. The object is two-fold - to supply planes at low cost to civilian aviation, and to increase the output of the factory.

*Lester Baker*  
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MIL. INTELL. B'D.

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S WAR DEPARTMENT

Buenos Aires, July 30, 1938

No. 5837

Subject: Current Events, Argentina, July.

To: Asst. C. of S., G-2, War Department, Washington.

RECEIVED G/2 W. D. AUG 30 1938

CUTS IN BUDGET.

An important statement was submitted recently to Congress by the Ministry of Finance, urging a wholesale pruning of the current year's budget. It will be recalled that the 1938 budget was practically a repetition of that of 1937 with minor modifications. Without reverting to ancient history, suffice it to say that the Finance Department reckons that the total expenditure on the basis of present credits will amount, 1938, to a total of 977,859,378 pesos and that the corresponding revenue may be estimated at 900,707,505 pesos. The limit of actual economy which is likely to be effected is stated at about 20,000,000 pesos, so that in the best of circumstances the country will have to contend with a deficit of 57,200,000 pesos. The ministerial message is, therefore, in the nature of an S.O.S. to Congress with the plea that every possible effort of cooperation be given in the sense of urgent measures of economy in order that it may be possible to overcome this dire emergency. Although the situation is one which warrants grave misgivings, there is at any rate ground for satisfaction in the fact that His Excellency the Minister of Finance, Doctor Pedro Gropo, has not hesitated to come out into the open with a candid warning with regard to what the country is actually up against. Some heroic measures will undoubtedly have to be resorted to, although customs revenue is still in favourable comparison for the half year period with last year's figures, this is not going to last much longer. The position of the textile and other manufacturing industries is only too well known, and these establishments cannot shoulder any further burdens of taxation. The result is that a drastic pruning of expenditure seems to be the only way out.

URUGUAYAN WHEAT FOR BOLIVIAN PETROLEUM.

An operation has been concerted in Montevideo whereby the Uruguayan "Ancap" entity acquires 20,000 tons of crude petroleum from the Bolivian State Petroleum Department in exchange for Uruguayan wheat of equivalent value.

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5 copies retained in LA  
JPS

No. 5837

HELIUM IN BRAZIL.

An Associated Press telegram from Rio de Janeiro says that it is reported from Sao Paulo that the Director of the Geographical and Geological Department, Señor Annibal Bastos Aires, informed Press representatives that the presence of helium gas had been verified by soundings carried out in the State of Sao Paulo and that the Federal Geological Department has exact information on the subject.

NEW LEGISLATION.

The Argentine Congress has voted the sum of \$3 million pesos for Argentina's participation in the New York and San Francisco World Fairs.

The purchase of the Itaca Oil Company by the Y.P.F. (Government owned oil company) for \$2,500,000 pesos has been approved by the Administration.

Official exchange permits for importation of American lumber are being refused since last week, thus forcing practically all American goods, with the exception of one or two articles into the free exchange market. Italy is also being refused permits on a number of items owing to decreased purchases of Argentine products and already complaints are coming from Rome.

The Administration has issued a decree fixing new regulations for the entry of foreigners into the country. Effective October 1 foreigners, not residents of Argentina, must apply to the Immigration Department thru Argentine Consuls for a permit of free landing..."libre desembarco".... paying the expenses thereof. Consuls will not visa passports without this permit. A committee composed of representatives of the Ministries of Interior, Foreign Relations, and Agriculture will examine each request for a permit. Consuls must submit to the Immigration Department the following information on each request for permit: reasons the traveller wishes to go to Argentina; nationality; occupation or profession; length of time he expects to remain; means of livelihood; and other personal data. The following exceptions to the above requirements are: diplomatic and consular officers; employees of friendly governments; foreigners whose situation of respectability or the functions he exercises make it unnecessary for the purposes which the decree aims for; tourists; nationals of bordering countries in transit; passengers in transit who present a certificate approved by the Consul in the jurisdiction of their destiny; those who prove they have a position to which they are going or old residents. The decree further regulates requirements of tourists, relations of residents, etc.

*Lester Baker*  
Lester Baker, Col. Inf.  
Military Attaché

Original & 5 copies mailed Aug. 6th

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24 OCT 1938  
110  
MIL. INT'L. DIV.  
DEPARTMENT

Buenos Aires, September 30, 1938.

No. 5861.

Subject: Current Events, Argentina, September.

To: Asst. C. of S., G-2, War Department, Washington.

RECEIVED G-2 W. D. OCT 24 1938

NATIONAL LEGISLATURE.

The regular session of the legislature ended September 30th without considering a budget for 1939 and without action on a new organic law for the armed forces. The 1938 budget, with slight changes, is to be continued for another year. It is considered likely that President Ortiz will call an extra session of Congress within a short time to take up pressing legislative matters left over from the present session.

ARMY REORGANIZATION.

Legislation has been under consideration since 1935 for a new organic law for the armed forces, necessitated by the acquisition of such equipment as airplanes of modern types, anti-aircraft artillery and motorized equipment. The need has arisen for trained personnel detailed for the new arms and arranged for in tables of organization.

Near the close of the present session, several new proposals were introduced to be incorporated in the organic law, but no action has been taken. These proposals included a single head for the army and navy - probably to be called Minister of National Defense - the conscription of both sexes during war or emergency, males from 16 and females from 18 years of age, and that 20% of each year's conscripts should serve two years instead of one with the colors, while the number would be increased to 50% whenever economic conditions were such that the necessary money would be available.

FOREIGN SCHOOLS.

Strict control is hereafter to be exercised over all foreign schools in Argentina. This is the result of recent investigations into the conduct of Nazi and Fascist schools in various parts of the country. The National Board of Education has promulgated regulations on the matter which include: an outline of the class of instruction imparted, qualifications of the teachers, the elimination of all pictures or photographs of persons not connected with Argentine history from the walls of schools - this refers to pictures of Hitler found in schoolrooms during the investigation; the Argentine flag must be flown at all times and children must be taught the principles of the Argentine Constitution and history of the country. The diffusion of foreign political or racial ideals either privately or publicly is prohibited.

TO: Varas, C. O. S., C-S, et. Delegation  
Subject: Current Events  
Date: 10-1-39

Baker

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No. 5861.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION.

The National Roads Board has reported for the month of August that work on 339 kilometers of roads and 412 meters of bridgework was completed during that month at a cost of 2,005,000 Argentine pesos - about one-third this amount in U.S. Currency. Two important stretches of roadway were completed in the province of Buenos Aires, and other roads were completed in Entre Rios, Misiones and Rio Negro. At present the construction effort is on roads leading into Mar del Plata, the famous summer resort, and several good automobile roads are expected to be completed before the summer season opens in December.

TANKERS FROM ITALY.

It is stated in press dispatches from Italy that commercial circles in Genoa are preparing a plan for the purchase of considerable quantities of Argentine wool and hides which will be paid for in the form of tankers for the Argentine petroleum industry constructed in Italian shipyards.

OIL IN SALTA.

Replying to a request made by the Government of the Province of Salta, the directorate of Yacimientos Petroliferos Fiscales (the national petroleum organization) states that during the coming year it is expected the production in the province will be quadrupled.

The present production is 20,000 cubic meters and the yield for 1939 is expected to reach 80,000 cubic meters. This means that the province will receive more than one million pesos in petroleum royalties during the year.

AGAINST AGGRESSORS.

Recommendations for an economic sanction against aggressor nations in case of war was proposed in the Chamber of Deputies recently by Dr. Raul Taborda, Radical representative for Buenos Aires. He pointed out the necessity for an inter-American agreement to stop the sales of foodstuffs to aggressor nations as a measure tending to stop or lessen armed conflagration, in accordance with what is set forth in the League of Nations Pact and the Argentine Anti-war and Conciliation Pact.

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Military Attaché.